

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH :

Never have so few, robbed so many, of so much, for so long, so mercilessly, and returned so little, as has the world's parasitical clergy throughout exploited mankind's history.

—ANDY VENA



Freeethought

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GOD IS A MYTH; IMMORTALITY, AN ILLUSION; RELIGION, A GIGANTIC FRAUD

Letters

PLIGHT OF A RATIONALIST

Sir, I am extremely sorry for the abnormal delay in replying. The delay is due to unavoidable troubles caused to me by the selfish, fraudulent and vociferous supporters and heinous devotees and henchmen of Mr. Sai Baba. They sent petitions against me. They felt that I was solely responsible for the advent of Dr. Kovoov to Anantapur. I feel, they ignored the truth and raided over me. It is a pity that they never face the open challenge either by Dr. Kovoov or by Dr. H. Narasimhaiah or other antagonists who have published articles or letters or statements in various news papers, journals and magazines. My activities are never harmful and never directed against any individual but against the propagation of superstition and against the attractions of ravishment. I am always confident of the efficiency and bonafides of whatever I do and I never care for irrationalists. I am guided by reason and by reason alone. I believe in the material world. The material world is life and source of inspiration for me and should be for any sane man.

S. JAYARAMA REDDY,
Anantapur.

ISLAM AND RE-BIRTH

Sir, The Great controversy between Bangalore

University Committee and Satya Sai Baba gave rise to some interesting issues.

Satya Sai Baba claims that he is re-incarnation of Sirdi Sai Baba. According to his life story, Sirdi Baba was a staunch Muslim, performing all the five prayers a day in the mosque in which he was living. As Islam does not have faith in re-birth, it is not known how a Muslim saint like Sai Baba of Sirdi took re-birth against basic principles of Islam and that too not as a Muslim but as an Orthodox Hindu, who is neither a scholar nor a philosopher, but a semi literate, who has studied only a few classes in Telugu.

If Sirdi Baba was thrown by his God out of the sphere of his strong faith to take re-birth as an orthodox Hindu to spread 'Man God' cult, then this punishment might have been given to him due to some of his great sins, which nobody is aware of. 'Man God' cult is "un-islamic" and the greatest sin. According to history one mansoor was hanged for his claim that he himself was God.

Will Satya Sai Baba or any of his disciples throw light on this point? Talking of re-birth of such a religious Muslim saint is a great insult to Islamic principles and Sirdi Sai Baba himself.

I humbly invite attention of muslim scholars to ponder over this point and clear doubts created by such declaration.

Madras :

Obedurrahman.

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The views and opinions expressed in the signed articles are not necessarily, those of the Editor or I R A.—Ed

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FreeThought

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Editorial

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE IX CONVENTION

Rationalism has made an impact on the all-India scene. Delegates from North and South, West and East were elated and enthusiastic. The successful completion of I.R.A.'s Fourth Miracle Exposure Campaign (with demands from new quarters for similar programmes) has emphasized the need for making it a more frequent and wider feature.

The successful Convention of the Indian Rationalists at Nagpur did raise quite a few issues. At one time there were doubts in some minds, whether rationalism meant only eradication of miracle-mongering and superstition. However, at the culmination of the get-together, no one was in doubt that rationalists believed in nothing short of rationalism, to use a truism.

Rationalism, as some misleading self-styled acharyas like Rajneesh would suggest, is not a negative concept. Rationalists emphatically are aware religion and spiritualism of all varieties are mere products of fear, ignorance and illusion. What is positive is that Rationalism has a methodology and this is the method of science. With man as the centre, we rely on man's senses and his reasoning power to acquire knowledge. Speculation and subjective experience are not our leading lights.

There was consensus in the convention that our strategy should be to tackle Babas, astrology, palmistry superstition and casteism initially. People are still suffering under the weight of out-dated ideas spread by unscrupulous elements

whose aims are not entirely social or religious.

The economic and political implications of the outrageous religious ideas like destiny and Baba worship should be brought home to the people.

Rightly was there a call in the Convention that Rationalists should analyse and evaluate the present economic and political situation in the country. That rationalism and rapid economic development on the socialist path are inextricably intertwined was the consensus. To evolve a concrete programme of action, we

request members to use 'FREE THOUGHT' for expressing their views.



A OMISSION

Readers are requested to note that the article "How Babas are made" by Mr. James Harvey Johnson which has appeared in Nov/Dec. 1976 issue was reproduced from the "AMERICAN ATHEIST". We regret that the source was inadvertently omitted to have been acknowledged.....Ed.

AGENTS WANTED

Indian Rationalist Association wishes to appoint Agents to sell FREETHOUGHT at all Cities, Towns and Villages in India. Future issues will contain a minimum of 24 pages and priced at 60 Paise only. While we have no objection to give agency to the regular News Agents and Book Sellers, we would prefer those who would like to take up this more as a service rather than as business. For Agency Terms and Conditions please write to the General Secretary, I.R.A.

Contributors of articles to FREETHOUGHT are requested to kindly note the following points.

1. Articles should be original and neatly typed in double line space on single side and should be sent in duplicate.
2. As the publication of the articles in the journal may at times take some time, they are requested not to send copies of the same articles to other journals for publication.

Need for Rationalist Revolution

[The following is the full text of a message received from Mr. Abul Hasanat, Secretary of Bangladesh Humanist Association on the occasion of the 9th Conventon of IRA.—Ed]

Mr. Abul Hasanat, Convenor of Milan Sangha, Dacca and Secretary of the Bangladesh Humanist Association, and his intellectual friends over here congratulate you on the holding of the Nagpur Convention of the Indian Rationalists. He and his colleagues over here are co-workers with you all, in the programme of emancipating human minds from superstitions of all sorts—pious and secular. Mystery over the so-called 'Hereafter', 'Miracles', 'Occult happenings', 'Revelation', 'Inspiration' and imagined pleasures of 'Heaven' and pain and torments of 'Hell' etc., have kept human minds all over the world steeped in irrational hopes and fears and impeded progress of the human kind.

Students of human thought are well aware of the Middle Ages when orthodox Christianity with the rack, thumbscrew and the stake enforced its will and enslaved human thinking, when the dreadful inquisition persecuted, exiled and burnt thousands upon thousands of innocent Christians on charges, often only suspected, of heresy and blasphemy, when Copernicus and Galileo could not freely express what they actually saw in the heavens above. The enslavement of the human mind was so complete that, even later, Newton was afraid of publishing his now-famous Principle and Darwin, comparatively recently, encountered violent

opposition from orthodox Christianity for his Theory of Evolution and exposition of the Origin of Species as against the childish Biblical Tale of a Six-day Creation of the Universe in 4004 B.C.

BREAK-AWAY FROM THE BIBLE

The Renaissance in the Western World urged Jews and Christians themselves to scan earth and heaven in the light of Reason and not only of what has been said in the Bible. Modern Science and Technology owe their progress to this spirit of Free Enquiry.

It is remarkable how when the Bible was considered to be revealed and inspired by the great Lord Himself and every word of it as immutable truth a few hundred years ago by the great mass of Christians, critical researches from within Christianity itself has laid its blemishes bare, and it has been relegated to the role of a Jewish Miscellany of heterogenous origin and only legendary value. Not only that.

Bernard Shaw in a memorable passage denounces its authority and the people who doggedly go by it, as follows:

"As to Bible Science, it has, over, the nineteenth century materialistic fashion in biology, the advantage of being a science

of life and not an attempt to substitute physics and chemistry for it, but it is hopelessly pre-evolutionary, its descriptions of the origin of life and morals are obviously fairy tales, its astronomy is terracentric, its notions of the starry universe are childish, its story is epical and legendary, in short, people whose education is derived from the Bible are so absurdly misinformed as to be unfit for public employment, parental responsibility or the franchise."

NEED FOR RETHINKING FOR OTHERS

The bold words of Shaw apply not only to the Bible but more or less to other Scriptures also, and there is need for internal criticism for each of them.

And what has been said about the Biblical pundits applies equally well to Brahmins and Maulvis and other pious

middlemen many of whom are entirely ignorant of the march of modern knowledge.

This sub continent, thus, needs a 'Rationalist Revolution' more than elsewhere because science and technology here are yet in a rudimentary stage and social heredity keeps minds tied to age-old Shastras, Granthas, and Kitabs passing as immutable divine writs and revelations but which are actually mere pious speculations of well intentioned sages and saints whose knowledge and wisdom were limited to their own eras.

We heartily wish your Convention a grand success and implore you to intensify your attempts at emancipating human minds and inculcating an indomitable spirit of free enquiry.

Abul Hasanat
Dacca, Bangladesh.

DO YOU HAVE AN I.R.A. BRANCH AT YOUR PLACE ?

You will be happy to learn that during the IX Convention held at Nagpur on 18th and 19th December, 1976 it was decided to start I.R.A. Branches in large number in all the Districts and Towns. I.R.A. will be too pleased to guide the enthusiastic rationalists in starting New branches. For details please write to the General Secretary, I.R.A., 28, Pantheon Road, Egmore, Madras-8.

READ

CHARVAKA

(Telugu Rationalist Monthly)
22, State Bank Colony,
No. 1, Vijayawada, 10.

YUKTHIVADI

(Malayalam Rationalist Monthly)
Irinjalakuda, Kerala.

MESSAGES FOR IX CONVENTION

(Reproduced below are some of the messages received from all over the world on the occasion of the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists held on 18th & 19th December, 1976 at Nagpur—Ed.)

RAJ BHAVAN
BOMBAY—35 (WB)
10 December 1976.

Rationalism like socialism cannot be confined to mere study of books on those subjects but are both, in fact, ways of life and conflict with anything like superstitious thought or beliefs. Both have to permeate one's life and thought and be evident in the practice of living and one's outlook to one's own and others' lives and needs as part of a great human family which cannot separate itself into isolated individual units living without due regard to the conditions which surround one and demand one's service. As a whole, both represent attitudes of faith and our knowledge of science and the spirit of enquiry and can have little consequence if not devoted for the benefit of society and for service of others. I can only welcome the Convention you propose to have in Nagpur and hope that it will help to promote the spirit of scientific enquiry and the logical consequence of it. Please accept my best wishes for a successful Convention.

ALI YAVAR JUNG
Governor of Maharashtra

(The above message was signed by the Governor just a day before his sad demise on 11-12-1976—Ed.)

I am happy to learn that the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists is being held at Nagpur.

It is a matter of gratification that the Association has been contending against superstition and miracle-mongering in society to pave the way for the inculcation of scientific temper and rational thinking.

On this occasion, I have great pleasure in extending my cordial greetings to the participants and wishing the deliberations all success.

D. Devaraj Urs,
Chief Minister,
Bangalore.

I am glad to learn that the Indian Rationalist Association, Madras proposes to hold its IX Convention at Nagpur on 18th and 19th December, 1976.

I send my good wishes.

C. Achutha Menon,
Chief Minister
Kerala

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 7th December, 1976. The Chief Minister Shri S.B. Chavan, wishes all success to the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists being held at Nagpur on December, 18th and 19th.

Private Secretary to C.M.
Maharashtra.

I am desired by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of letter No. 121/6659, dated the 8th December, 1976 on the subject mentioned above and to convey his good wishes on the occasion of holding the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists at Nagpur on December 18th and 19th.

P.G. Vaidya,
Deputy Secretary to the Governor.
Gujarat

Raj Bhavan, Punjab,
CHANDIGARH

Governor is pleased to know that the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists is being held at Nagpur on the 18th and 19th of this month. He sends his best wishes for the success of the Convention.

Sd/- G.P.S. SAHI
Secretary to Governor, Punjab.

As you know I have not been keeping well for a long time. In the hope that the stay in the valley will restore me to normalcy and I will be able to participate in the Rationalist Convention at Nagpur on 18th and 19th December, I did not write to you so far. But my hope has proved a vain one and I continue to be in an invalid state unable to undertake a long journey or participate in committee debates or public function.

I have no words to tell you how sad I feel at my inability to be with you and other fellow Rationalists from all over the country who will assemble at Nagpur. I

was looking forward with intense pleasure to the great occasion.

But whether or not I am present at the Convention I wish it a grand success. India's future lies only in the triumph of rationalism and defeat of the forces which keep hundreds of millions of our country men in darkness of ignorance in order to exploit them in every field of social activity. Let us carry the torch of knowledge to all corners of India and awaken the masses thus bringing to an end the age-old exploitation.

Sd/- PREM NATH BAZAZ

New Delhi
9-12-'76

We are pleased to be able to send you this message on the occasion of your IX Convention at Nagpur on 18th and 19th December, 1976.

We hope that this Convention will be as successful as the previous ones and will mark a big step forward in the history of humanism.

As an international movement we have to rely on our national affiliates for the dissemination of the humanist idea at the local level and we are sure that your Convention will both answer that requirement and provide a new stimulus for the international humanist and rationalist community.

Sd/- Prof. Dr. Piet Thoenes,
Chairman, International Humanist
Holland and Ethical Union.

Trusting this letter will not arrive in India too late to present to the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists on 18th and 19th December 1976, I have taken the precaution of sending it to the Nagpur address.

At this time of total media overkill on behalf of superstition (Christianity and Judaism) in America and at a time when Atheists in America have lost their civil rights and are being completely suppressed, we atheists in America look to the leadership in India to help bring our plight before the world.

Tragically, in America the radio, television, theatre and newspapers are in the hands of the superstitious. This is a development not foreseen by those early Atheists who had hoped that technical developments through scientific discoveries would help bring enlightenment to this nation. It is our fervent hope that in India we may find that political and cultural climate which will counter this thrust. We, in America today, are helpless and call upon you for assistance.

You fine, courageous and enterprising individuals understand the dynamics of discriminatory practice and how they are fomented by Christian missionaries. You have also seen the betrayal of the Atheist ideal by Russia, China, Cuba and other supposedly Atheist governments. You have seen the demise of Atheist activity in America, in Australia (the magazine of the Australian Atheist Society has ceased publication), and throughout the Western orbit. Shortly, the hope of the rest of the world hinges on those decisions you make at this convention.

Finally, all the knowledge in the world is useless unless it is translated into action.

Best wishes for a successful convention :

Sd/- CARRY DE YOUNG, Ph.D.
Chancellor.

Minnesota Institute of Philosophy

TEXAS, U.S.A.
Dt. 11th Dec., 1976

JANUARY 1977

I support an active, militant Atheist movement.

The most prominent institutions of enslavement are the state and the church. Once we do away with both we can go about constructing a harmonious society-free from government and superstition, based on openness and honesty, mutual aid and voluntary cooperation.

I send warm regards and best wishes for the New Year to all who attend and support the Convention.

Randall S. Cornish
San Diego Social—Revolutionary
Anarchist Federation U.S.A.

Ohio (U.S.A)
27-12-'76

* * *

Thank you for informing me about your IX Convention of Indian Rationalists at Nagpur on the 18th and 19th December, 1976.

I am sorry I cannot attend in person. Meanwhile I wish to express my warmest congratulations to all the participants who will attend, and to all those who have organized the Convention. Will you please convey to all, my best wishes for a successful conclusion of the Convention and above all will you kindly inform all your members that they have friends in Europe and England.

The forces of irrationality are progressing everywhere, but it is because of this, that we must continue to battle against all odds, to make a better, happier and more rational world.

Sd/- Avro Manhattan
LONDON
9-12-1976

BOOK REVIEW

'LURE OF MIRACLES'

BY PREMANAND

The author could not have timed the book better. Sai Baba who has been under attack by I.R.A. and Dr. A. T. Kovoov, was under pressure from Dr. H. Narasimhaiah. Thanks to certain weeklies and dailies, the influence of Sai Baba could be considered to have been reduced. This was the moment when an authentic and well-documented account of Sai Baba was felt needed.

A concise book, it portrays the true characteristics of Satyanarayana Raju alias Sai Baba. On going through the book, the reader is convinced that Raju is no better than any other mortal. The facts are so forcibly brought out that Satyanarayana Raju emerges as a helpless patient, an avaricious man and a power-hungry leader, vainly boasting about his non-existent powers.

What is more, the darker and shadier activities of the Baba are brought out vividly with background information. Raju's weakness for women, his way of netting a few influential individuals who have been subsequently black mailed, his propaganda tactics, the means adopted by him to amass wealth, all find their due place in the book.

The book details the anti-democratic group who have propped up the Sai image. This is important as one should know the sources from which Sai cult receives its substance. The vested interests who have

been fighting against all progressive ideals including socialism and rationalism, have created and sustained Baba as a focal point for the gullible poor. Puttaparthi is the meeting place for smugglers and black marketeers with corrupt bureaucrats. Baba has been hatching and promoting conspiracies against an elected government. The book emphatically calls for government probing of the activities of Sai Samitis.

The author who has spent considerable time, money and energy proposes to bring out a further volume or two on his vexed hero. Readers will find the book most interesting and informative in exposing the greatest Indian hoaxter of this century. Readers could aid the author by collecting further anecdotes on Sai Baba so that the nail is ultimately laid on this ghost. Government has to be coaxed to take action against Baba only by the weight of facts.

The book appears to have been proof-read in some haste. The next edition may not carry most of the printing mistakes, we hope.

We congratulate, so should every right-thinking man, the author on his bold attempt to call a spade, a spade and a scoundrel a scoundrel.

The book is priced at Rs. 8/- Copies Can be had from IRA with a special discount of 10% for members.

Report of the general secretary of
Indian Rationalist Association
presented to the

**IX CONVENTION OF
INDIAN RATIONALISTS
AT NAGPUR ON
18TH DECEMBER 1976**

I have great pleasure in presenting this Report on the developments in the Rationalist Movement which have occurred after our VIII Convention of Indian Rationalists held at Madras on 26th, 27th and 28th December, 1974, at which many important decisions were taken to strengthen the Rationalist Movement. After two years, we are again meeting here at Nagpur to take stock of the situation and prepare future plans and strategy to further strengthen the Rationalist Movement.

Let me, in the first instance, express my profound sorrow at the absence of a couple of veteran Rationalists who actively participated at the last Convention but who have since passed away. These were Mr. Goraji and Mr. Ziauddin who were both Presidents of I. R. A. in the past. I am sure, if only all of us work with the dedication and zeal of these Rationalists, it should not be difficult for us to bring about a Rationalist Society in India before long.

Being Rationalists, as we are, there are bound to be differences between any two Rationalist Associations and even among the Members of the same Association. There is however nothing wrong in having these

differences since we are all Rationalists and as a Rationalist, everyone is entitled to have his own ideas and opinions. All the same, based on the Common Minimum Programme evolved at the last Convention, the Rationalists to a considerable extent have come closer to each other to achieve the desired objects.

As you can easily appreciate fighting 'god' is a herculean task and we have to go slow in this regard. Moreover, one should be at least above average intelligence to understand the fallacies in the theories of the believers about their concept of god. We are therefore still restricting this issue to the intellectuals, though we do not make a secret of our Atheism.

Immediately after the VIII Convention was over, we have taken up the issue of godmen very seriously. For, even the believers can be convinced about the truth behind the so called miracles and the true colours of the so called godmen if the facts, are properly explained to them. For this purpose we have started a series of Campaigns known as "Divine Miracle Exposure Campaigns." For these Campaigns, we have requested Dr. Kooor to lend his services since he is perhaps

the only person in the world who has spent over half a century in investigating the "miracles" and "Supernatural" or "paranormal powers". We thought, and I presume rightly so, that he is the most suitable person to explain to the people in India about the modus operandi of these tricksters. Though Dr. Kovoov himself can perform Magic and Hypnotism, considering his age, we have obtained the services of some of our Members to practically demonstrate the tricks of the "godmen" through magic and hypnotism.

The first Divine Miracle Exposure Campaign was organized by I.R.A. with the help of its Associates at over a dozen centres in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bombay as an experimental one in March and April 1975. Though this was a moderate success, I.R.A. ventured the second Campaign during October/November 1975. This was on much larger scale than the first one and it was a greater success as compared to the earlier one. In this Campaign we have covered the States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Kerala.

As we had still a long way to go, we planned for the third Campaign in the months of May/June 1976 covering new cities and towns. It was on the eve of this campaign that Dr. H. Narasimhaiah, Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University, got a sum of Rs. 25,000/- sanctioned for the purpose of investigating the "Miracles". A committee was also constituted by Dr. Narasimhaiah, under his Chairmanship for investigating the "miracles". They were kind enough to include Prof. A. M. Dharmalingam, one of the Founder Members of I.R.A. and President of Karnataka Rationalist Association in the

Committee. In the course of the III Campaign when Dr Kovoov and I.R.A. representatives went to Bangalore, the Committee invited them to the University and assured their support and sympathy to our Campaigns. The III Campaign in which we covered the States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, lasted over six weeks. The welcome change in the attitude of the people was clearly visible during this Campaign. At every centre thousands of people greeted Dr. Kovoov and I.R.A. men and flocked to witness the programmes. Even the erstwhile staunch devotees of various "godmen" started entertaining second thoughts about the genuineness of the claims of their gurus. The Press, which was hitherto blacking out the activities of the Rationalists, could also not ignore the upsurge of the Rationalist Movement and they were forced, rather reluctantly, to give a fairly good coverage in their respective news papers and journals.

Soon thereafter, the "Child-god"—Sai Krishna of Pandavapura who was already defeated by Dr. Kovoov and I.R.A. by default was fully exposed by Dr. Narasimhaiah's team mates. As you must be aware of the full facts of this exposure, I do not want to dwell at length on this. This was soon followed by the release of letters exchanged between Dr. Narasimhaiah and Sai Baba. The earlier silence and the subsequent derogatory and defamatory remarks of Sai Baba against the Vice-Chancellor created an unprecedented stir in the country. It made even the conservatives including the religionists to come out openly against Sai Baba. The people who were earlier afraid to say

even a word against Sai Baba, are now in a position to boldly and openly talk and write anything against the India's top most "Miracle Man".

Though I.R.A. was quite satisfied with the public opinion that it could mobilize through the first three Campaigns, in order to put an end once and for all to all the tall claims of "godmen", it was decided to organize one more Campaign, the IV in the series, in the months of November/December 1976. This campaign which was inaugurated at Ernakulam on 13-11-76 comes to a close to-morrow at Nagpur. During the course of this Campaign, we have already covered the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat. In this Campaign too, every programme at every centre was a fantastic success. You can imagine the extent of popularity of these Campaigns from the way in which thousands of people flocked to our programmes, even paying the entrance fee fixed for the same. There was a time when nobody was prepared to attend our Rationalist Meetings even if it was thrown open free of any entrance fee. Now at most centres, we fixed an entrance fee mainly to cover expenses of the Campaign and secondly to restrict the crowds.

During these two years while educating and enlightening the innocent people we have also been simultaneously doing our best, to expose the myths behind the "godmen". Mr. Gnanasambanda Desika, popularly known as Madurai Mathathipathi, Mr. Siva Arumugam Pillai, the Nadi Astrologer and some other less known "Miracle Men" are all victims of I.R.A. The Nagpur

Rationalist Association has also done well by exposing Mr. Baliram Baba, popularly known as Samathi Baba, Lashkari Baba etc.

You will also be delighted to hear that various Departments of the Government are also going all out to unearth the undisclosed income, unaccounted wealth and other nefarious activities of the "godmen". They have so far, literally unearthed gold to the tune of about Rs. 35 lacs belonging to Ananthars at Mezhivizhi Salai, Diamonds and Emeralds worth Rs. 74 lacs at Ahmedabad, about Rs. 1 crore worth of undisclosed assets belonging to the Bala Yogi mission at Delhi, huge amounts, the exact quantum of which is yet to be assessed, belonging to Pandrimalai Swami of Madras, etc. Various other Saints and Sadhus have also been brought to book for varied types of crimes such as Murder, rape, child lifting, cheating, etc.

I am glad that the Union Government, under the able leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, has realized the need to amend the Constitution, to make it obligatory on the part of every citizen to promote and develop the Scientific Temper, Spirit of Enquiry, Humanism and Reform. This new Fundamental Duty is very similar to the Objects Clause in the Memorandum of Association of I.R.A. adopted in 1949, that is even before the Constitution of India came into force for the first time on 26-1-1950. Though belated, the progressive move of the Government in amending the Constitution is therefore highly commendable. Although we have been working all these years for the promotion of Scientific temper as a matter of our Fundamental Right, hereafter we will have

to continue to work for the same cause as our Fundamental Duty. We have to therefore on this occasion rededicate ourselves to the cause of rationalism in the larger interests of the country. I therefore request the passive Rationalists who practice Rationalism in their private lives to come out openly and help their fellow countrymen also to develop a similar scientific outlook.

Though during the past few years we have established Branches or Affiliated State-wide Associations in more than half of the States in India, we have still a long way to go. If only the Rationalist Movement were to make inroads into the common masses in the country, we also need District-wide Associations in every District in India. While the District Associations and State Associations can be independent and autonomous entities, framing their own rules, choosing their own projects and adopting their own methods of working, it is imperative for all these units to be properly co-ordinated. For such a co-ordination and co-operation between various District Units, it is better if they are all affiliated to the respective State Units and for similar reasons all the State Units should be affiliated to the All India Association.

As already touched earlier, Rationalists holding different views on some of the minor matters are at present working under different banners. Though the labels are different, the main objects, aims and ideals of all Rationalists, I feel, are one and the same and so there is definitely a scope for all of us to work together keeping aside the few differences on some of the minor issues, provided of course all of us keep ourselves away from politics. We have to

therefore mobilize all the Rationalist Forces in the country and this subject will be discussed in detail in the Second Session of this Convention.

It is not just enough if we mobilise all the Rationalist Forces. We have to chalk out at least a minimum programme for the next four years or at least for the next two years, so that we can go ahead in our work in a well planned manner. As you can understand, planning is one of the most important aspects in any movement and we shall therefore take up this subject and discuss in detail at our third session.

While on this I would also like to make a note of caution to the Rationalist Workers. Any amount of talking, planning and paper work is not going to do us any good, unless these plans are translated into action. The execution of the plans is as important as the drafting of the plans. The implementation of various schemes calls for a lot of dedication and sacrifice on the part of those responsible for their implementation. In this regard, we rationalists, have to set an example for the people in other walks of life. I am rather ashamed to say that there are a few persons here and there even in the Rationalist Movement who have a weakness for money or name and fame. If we are going to take up Rationalism to meet our own selfish ends, we will land nowhere, except inviting criticism from all quarters. Already, the vested interests in various religions are just waiting anxiously for an opportunity to find fault with the Rationalists. We should never give any room whatsoever for these religious people to make any adverse remarks against us. If we want to

maintain high standards of integrity in the Movement, we have to necessarily enforce strict discipline and we should not hesitate even to expel the erring members if it comes to that.

While we are all very eager to expand the Membership of Rationalist Associations, we should also guard ourselves against the possible infiltration by the religionists in our ranks and file. My humble opinion is that in our anxiety to expand our Membership, we should not compromise on the very basic principles of Rationalism. We are opposed to any sort of religion, any sort of doctrine and any sort of Guru or Mentor. If we are also prepared to accept anything as authentic or sacred, we will, at best, become reformers and not Rationalists.

While on this, I would also like to touch about an unhealthy trend in the Rationalist Movement in India. Having given up the faith in the doctrines and the religious gurus, some Rationalists tend to become the "disciples" of one Rationalist leader or another, and reject and also decry the philosophies or projects of another Rationalist. Though the Rationalist Pioneers like M.N. Roy, Periar E.V.R., Goraji, Sir P.N. Paranjpye, Bertrand Russell etc., were all great Rationalists, I feel, we should not commit ourselves to any of these. Rather, we can accept and respect all these pioneers and work for the cause of Rationalism. At the same time, we should also not be holding on to the same old views without changing with times. Dynamism is an essence of Rationalist Movement.

Though the attitude of the press towards the Rationalist Movement is now much better than what it was a couple of years back, we need their co-operation in a much larger measure. The importance and the need for the support from the press for a Movement like ours cannot be over emphasized. The press is in an enviable position to mend the public opinion for or against a particular movement. I have therefore a special appeal to be made to the Press. As we Rationalists are fighting the battle with limited resources both in men and money, we have to look forward to their co-operation by giving a good coverage for our activities and also by generally extending their moral support. We will be highly grateful to the press if all the News Papers and Magazines in English and in Indian languages allot a column or a page in every issue for the promotion of scientific temper and spirit of enquiry. Though the article relating to the Fundamental Duty on this point is only applicable to the individual citizen of the country, I request the press to take it upon themselves to help the Government and the Rationalists by giving maximum publicity to this Fundamental Duty.

I feel that it is needless for me to appeal to the Government to use the All India Radio and Television for promoting a Scientific outlook among the people. With due apologies to the men at the helm of the affairs, I am pained to say that it is most unfortunate that the T.V. and A.I.R. at the moment are going all out to propagate various religions and even the "godmen". For instance a year back, the Madras T.V. has telecast a full report on

the Sai Baba's Birth Day Celebrations at Puttaparthi. This sort of propaganda for the "living gods", through the media of T.V. and A.I.R. will only add to the superstitions and obscurantism already vastly prevalent in the country. I therefore request the Hon. Prime Minister and her Cabinet Colleagues to personally, immediately and seriously look into the matter and put end to this sort of religious propaganda through the Government Machinery.

I also request the Government to institute immediate enquiries into the affairs of all the known "godmen" who are believed to be making crores and crores of rupees every year in India and abroad. Even if the notorious "godmen" like Sai Baba, Bhagawan Rajneesh, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Bala Yogishwar, Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swami, and their accomplices are subjected to investigations, I am sure the Government can easily confiscate a few hundreds of crores of rupees in a matter of a year or two. This will not only help the Government to further consolidate their Consolidated Fund, but also save the millions of people of India from the clutches of the "godmen".

We shall be discussing some of these points again in greater detail today and tomorrow. The Delegates are all requested to share their own experiences and make practical suggestions to enable us to put all these in a nut shell in the form of

Resolutions in the last session of the Convention.

As you can understand the task that we have taken up is a very tough one and unless hundreds and thousands of Rationalists extend their helping hands to this movement, we will not be in a position to reach the people. We need an All India Advisory Board with eminent and experienced Rationalists as its members. We have therefore planned to constitute this Advisory Board at the IV Session of the Convention and the delegates are requested to propose the names of eminent persons from different walks of life and from different parts of the country to be nominated as members of this Board. This Board will be framing the policies on an All India basis to be executed by various Rationalist Organisations in India. I hope that all the like minded Associations in India, will also come forward to accept the policies and programmes of the Advisory Board.

Before I conclude let me thank all of you for giving a patient hearing to my Report on the progress of the Rationalist Movement.

(A. Suryanarayana)
General Secretary

Indian Rationalist Association

Nagpur,

18th December, 1976

Mobilization of Rationalist Forces

(The following is the text of the Presidential address by Mr. M. Prabha at the Second Session of the IX Convention of IRA at Nagpur on 18-12-76)

We have reached a stage when we have to play a very significant role in the reshaping of society in India. I was often wondering whether our organizations were making any headway. Of course, when we constituted India as a Sovereign Democratic Republic and enshrined in our Constitution the human values like liberty, equality, fraternity and justice we could see that the rational element was exercising its redoubtable influence. And now, after a quarter of a century our Constitution has confirmed its faith in the sovereignty of reason by providing therein that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of enquiry and reform. This amendment has given a marvellous face-lift to our Constitution. Because it is only by developing scientific temper, humanism, the spirit of enquiry and reform and connected matters that we can create a new man, a new society, a new people, a new nation and a new life.

But we should bear in mind that this process is far from easy. India has all along been a nation of religious fanatics and communal bigots; in fact it has been religion and caste and the beliefs that support them that have been obstructing the progress of India and stifling its march towards prosperity; no doubt it was on account of the realization that only by eschewing the pernicious influence of religion from the mind of man could we create a republic which would lay stress on socialism and secularism also.

We have to bear in mind that we could do thus far is not much. Our membership is very much limited. We do not have branches or affiliated organizations except in a very few places. Of course, there are some organizations which propagate our ideas under one name or another in various parts of India.

This is not the first time that we consider the necessity for having some sort of a union or federation of free-thought organizations in India. For some time past we have been trying with this idea but somehow we could not take any decision. The time has come for us to take a definite decision. It has, in fact, become a historic necessity. The present social and intellectual situation in India compel us to take a definite decision regarding this matter.

All of us, I know, have been thinking about this question. I feel that as persons who possess an open mind, and who can examine problems without bias or prejudice, we cannot but find that such an idea of a union or federation has to materialise. I do understand that those of us who are actively working for the promotion of one aspect or other of free-thought or rationalism may not want their identity or individuality to merge with that of something else. I will be the last to say that it must be done, I need not say that even within a particular organization no two people agree on all matters concerning that organization. Nor do we want every individual to be his own master, to have his own ideas, to develop his own views and

implement them to the best of his ability according to the method most suited for the purpose.

You all know what will be the advantages that we will be deriving if we stand together. Let me mention some of them. Some years back the Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of England had suggested this idea to me. The voices of two persons will certainly be louder than the voice of one. The views and opinions of a collection of individuals will always be better listened to than that of one individual, in a democracy. That being so, number is a powerful factor. If we can say that we represent so many organizations and so many people, our voice will have a force and strength which nobody will be able to ignore. We all feel that the duty of making people develop the spirit of scientific temper involves a good deal of endeavours. And propaganda is one of the most important things. We cannot do much without propaganda. We have only a few publications. Their circulations are limited. We have not been getting opportunities to ventilate our views in the popular dailies or weeklies or similar publications. So it has become necessary for us to find ways and means to popularize our own publications. In this context I have to mention something which we have to view quite seriously. As soon as the papers reported that there is a proposal to amend the Constitution by saying that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to promote scientific temper, people here and there have begun deliberately to water down the scope of that duty by saying that scientific temper is some sort of spiritualism, and so on and so forth. We can see behind this move a calculated conspiracy to hoodwink the people of India and make them continue to be chained to the superstitious and blind beliefs engendered by religions and connected institutions and impede all progress.

Those who are here, I do know, have definite views on this subject: through our discussions we have to crystallize our thoughts about it. My humble suggestions are these:—

Let us have an organization as I have indicated above: a Union or Federation of Free-thought Organizations of India. I suggest this because, the organizations we have are called the Indian Rationalist Association, or the Atheist Centre, the Atheist Association, the Humanist Association, the Secular Society etc. Of course the words Rationalism, Atheism, Humanism and Secularism are not synonymous but they are related terms. Some of us may have some objection to give the Union or Federation a name that is now being used for any particular organization. If we use the name Free Thought Organization, nobody can have any objection.

I don't say that it should be a very well-knit organization. We have to co-ordinate the activities of the various organizations and prepare a concrete programme of action for achieving our objects. Each of these will have to function as a complement to the other organizations.

We need a committee consisting of two or three representatives from each of these organizations and let there be a President and a co-ordinator or Convenor or a Secretary. Will it not be good if they are not Office Bearers of any of the member organizations?

The vastness of our country is something that stands in the way of our coming together frequently, but that does not matter: we can exchange our ideas through correspondence.

We have to bear in mind that the various rationalist forces have to discharge a very important function on this occasion so that the future of India is built on strong foundations. India is a very poor country when we

count the number of intellectuals. Only if scientific temper is developed can we have intellectuals in India. So our most important function shall be the promotion of scientific temper, humanism and connected matters.

In this context, I would request you to recall that two other clauses among the fundamental duties also are of great interest to us. They are : (e) which reads thus : to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities ; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of woman, and

(j) which runs thus : to strive towards excellence in all sphere of individual and collective activity, so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

We know that the free-thinkers, all the world over, have been fighting sectional diversities whether they be based on religion, sect, caste, community or anything like that. We

have always been standing for the emancipation of women and it is common knowledge that excellence of character which alone would contribute to the excellence in all the spheres of individual and collective activity can be cultivated only when the sovereignty of reason is acknowledged and we are working for that also.

If democracy is to function here in its purest form : if liberty, equality, fraternity and justice are to inform and animate the thought, words and deeds of every citizen of India, if the numerous evils that pervade the Indian society are to be dispelled, if the teeming millions of India are to be emotionally integrated and if India is to take its rightful place in the great comity of nations, our organizations also have to play their most responsible and unavoidable part. Let us do that, and that here and now. How best we can do that is the question before us. We know the answer. Let us stand together. Let us rally, marshal and mobilize all our forces. If we do so victory will be ours. ☐

MANILA CRACKDOWN ON FAITH HEALERS

The Philippine authorities have ordered a crackdown on faith healers who attract hundreds of foreigners as well as locals every year in the hope of miracle cures.

The faith healers, some of whom operate out of resort hotels in the mountain city of Baguio, as well as in Manila, claim to be able to cure even cancer and go through elaborate rituals. The national bureau of investigation has been asked to stamp out the illegal practice of medicine sometimes called "Psychic Surgery" by its practitioners.

(This is a news clipping from Times of India dated 1-12-1976).

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE IX CONVENTION OF INDIAN RATIONALISTS

At the end of the IX Convention of Indian Rationalists held at Nagpur on 18th and 19th December, 1976 the following resolutions were unanimously passed.

1. This Convention wishes to record its deep sorrow at the sad demise of Mr. Ali Yawar Jang, Governor of Maharashtra on 11-12-76 and conveys its condolences to all the members of the bereaved family.

2. This Convention congratulates the Hon. Prime Minister and her Cabinet Colleagues for amending the preamble of the Constitution of India making it a Fundamental Duty of every citizen to develop and promote Scientific Temper, Spirit of enquiry, Humanism and Reform.

3. It has been resolved to constitute an Advisory Board for the Promotion of Scientific Outlook with the following persons as its Members subject to their consent.

CHAIRMAN :

1. Mr. P. N. Haksar, New Delhi.

CONVENOR :

2. Mr. M. Prabha, Trivandrum.

MEMBERS :

3. Mr. K. A. Abbas, Bombay.
4. Mr. Kushwant Singh, Bombay.

5. Mr. Justice A. Sambasiva Rao, Hyderabad.
6. Dr. H. Narasimhaiah, Bangalore.
7. Dr. R. Ramanna, Trombay.
8. Mr. E. V. K. Sampath, Madras.
9. Dr. Nayudamma, Director General, C. S. I. R.
10. Dr. Swaminathan, I. C. A. R. Delhi.
11. Mr. Justice Subramania Potty, Trivandrum.
12. Dr. Barlinge, Nagpur.

More members may be coopted to the Board from time to time.

4. This Convention resolves to make an appeal to Government of India to abolish all Festival Holidays and restrict the closed Holidays to a maximum of six including the three National Holidays and May Day and compensating the lost closed Holidays by increasing the casual/privilege leave.

5. This Convention appeals to the Central and State Governments not to include lessons which would have the effect of inculcating religious faith in the approved Text Books. It also requests not to allow any prayers in any of the schools receiving Government aid.

6. This Convention deplores the attitude of A. I. R. and T. V. in giving a boost to various religions and it appeals to the Central Government not to allow such use of the Government machinery for religious propaganda. This Convention also requests the Central Government to use these media for

promoting Scientific Outlook among the people.

7. It is hereby resolved that the following Affiliated Associations of I.R.A. be converted into respective Branches of I. R. A. subject to their confirmation at their respective General Body Meetings :

AFFILIATED ASSOCIATION :

1. Delhi Rationalist Assn.
2. Punjab Rationalist Assn.
3. Gujarat Rationalist Assn.
4. Bombay Rationalist Assn.
5. Nagpur Rationalist Assn.
6. M. P. Rationalist Assn.
7. Rational Thinkers Forum.
8. Kerala Rationalist Assn.
9. Andhra Rationalist Assn.
10. Hyderabad Rationalist Assn.
11. Self Respect Movement.

TO BE CONVERTED AS

- I. R. A. Delhi Branch
- I. R. A. Punjab Branch
- I. R. A. Gujarat Branch
- I. R. A. Bombay Branch
- I. R. A. Nagpur Branch
- I. R. A. Bhilai Branch
- I. R. A. Ramkala Branch
- I. R. A. Kerala Branch
- I. R. A. Guntur Branch
- I. R. A. Hyderabad Branch
- I. R. A. Tamilnadu Branch

8. It has been resolved to adopt the following journals as the Official journals of I. R. A. and its regional Units and the members of I.R.A. shall be supplied either FREETHOUGHT or one of the following journals (as they choose) free of cost.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Malayalam | Yukthivadi |
| 2. Tamil | Arivu Vazhi or
Ariviyakkam |
| 3. Telugu | Charvaka |
| 4. Kannada | New Journal being
started |
| 5. Hindi | Bheem Patrika |
| 6. Gujarati | New journal being
started by G. R. A. |
| 7. Marathi | New journal being
started by N.R.A. |

THOUGHT * will be passed on to the respective publishers of the above journals.

9. It is resolved to celebrate the following "weeks" during the periods mentioned against each on an All India basis during the years 1977 and 1978.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Anti Dowry Week | From 27-3-77 To 2-4-77 |
| 2. Anti Astrology Week | From 5-6-77 To 11-6-77 |
| 3. Anti Caste Week | From 4-9-77 To 10-9-77 |
| 4. Anti Superstition Week | 4-12-77 To 10-12-77 |
| 5. Uniform Civil Code Week | 5-3-78 To 11-3-78 |
| 6. Secular Education Week | 4-6-78 To 10-6-78 |

That part of the membership fee (Rs. 6/- p.m.) collected hereto towards 'FREE-

7. Women's Liberation Week

3-9-78 To 9-9-78

8. Temple Property Taxation Week

3-12-78 To 9-12-78

The further details as to the nature of the Campaigns will be worked out by I. R. A. in consultation with the Branches and advised to all concerned for general guidance and implementation.

10. It is also resolved that various State Units should conduct the DMEC programmes within their own States with a local Magician and Hypnotist with a senior Rationalist coming from a different State. These Campaigns shall cover even smaller towns and big villages to carry Rationalism to the masses living in the rural areas.

11. It has also been decided to conduct Summer Courses on Rationalism for the benefit of Students, New Members of the Rationalist Associations and also those who are interested to know more about Rationalism to cover, inter alia, the following subjects :

1. Genetics with special emphasis on Darwin's Theory of Evolution.
2. Psychology with special emphasis on Freud.
3. Economics with special emphasis on Marxism.
4. Astronomy vis-a-vis Astrology.
5. Hinduism.
6. Christianity.
7. Islam.

8. Other contemporary religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, etc.

9. The need for a Rationalist Society.

10. Evolution of Rationalist thought and the History of Rationalist Movement in India and abroad.

12. It has further been decided that I. R. A. shall throw a challenge to the Godmen, Astrologers, Palmists etc., in its own name. Depending upon the persons coming forward the amount of the award shall be fixed between Rs. 1 lac and 2 lacs. Other details and conditions shall be worked out by I.R.A.

13. Amendment 44 of our Constitution should be implemented as early as possible to reconstruct India as a secular democratic socialist country. This Convention requests the Govt. of India to implement Uniform Civil Code by using the special powers of emergency and thereby nullify all other "Personal Laws".

14. This Convention congratulates the Govt. for raising the minimum age of marriage. It appeals to the Govt. to make registration of marriages compulsory for every Indian citizen irrespective of his caste, religion or state to facilitate effective implementation of Family Planning Measures as well as measures in the Marriage-Bill. This Convention deplores the call of a Section of people to exempt them from the provisions of the Marriage-age-Bill, and requests the Govt. not to yield to such irrational calls.

For the effective implementation of the above said laws, a semi-official 'Brigade' may be constituted with workers from the progressive organisations like I.R.A.

15. Though Andavar (Divyaguru) of Maivazhisalai claimed that he was the 'avatar' of Kalki, the C.B.I., Excise and Income Tax Officials proved that he was a black-marketeer keeping black money, unauthorised wealth and arms. So also Sai Baba of Puttaparthi claims that he is the 'avathar' of Shiridi Baba, Siva, Sakthi and so on and lives pompously like a Moghul King. He and his organisations had established a lot of branches in the guise of schools, colleges and hospitals within a few years. This Convention therefore appeals to the Govt. to get his income and properties properly assessed and punish him for Tax evasion if any.

Accepting money, ornaments, gold or any other form of wealth for preaching a religion or showing miracles should be considered as a social crime and it should therefore be prevented by suitable legal measures.

16. Rightist communal and religious forces like RSS, Janata-Islami, Jan sangh, Anandamarg, etc. are suspected to be indulging in nefarious activities in the guise of religious and spiritual activities.

Sai Seva Samithi, Ayyappa Seva Sangh, Kshetra - punarudharana Samithi, etc. are a few examples. Propagating ritualistic religion is an easy way to keep the masses under superstition. Superstitious people are easily driven against secular measures of the progressive Govt. which in turn is used for the political advantage by the rightist forces.

This Convention therefore, requests the Govt. of India to prevent public activities of communal or religious nature. People should be given freedom to pray but religious propaganda especially through microphones even during nights should not be allowed.

17. This Convention requests the Govt. of India to pass a Bill preventing sacrifice of all animals and birds in or in the vicinity of temples for propitiating gods. Measures for punishment for violations of the provisions of the bill should also be strictly implemented.

18. This Convention orally appeals to the Govt. of India and all the State Governments to issue necessary directives to the Government Dignitaries and Govt. officials especially those attached to the judiciary and police departments advising them not to participate in public programmes of communal or religious nature.

ANTI DOWRY NUMBER

In connection with the "Anti-Dowry Week" being celebrated by Indian Rationalist Association, from 20-3-1977 to 26-3-1977, the FREETHOUGHT issue for March 1977 will be devoted to the Dowry Problem and its remedies. Readers are requested to rush their articles and other matter relevant to the subject.....Ed

News and Notes

The IX Convention of Indian Rationalists which was attended by Delegates from IRA and all its affiliated Associations from all over India took place at Nagpur on 18th and 19th December, 1976. On 18th morning the Convention was inaugurated by Mr. Justice Dharmadhikari of Bombay High Court. In his inaugural address he referred to the superstitious climate in which Indians are living and he emphasized the need for a rationalist approach and scientific outlook among the people if the country were to make any progress. Earlier Mr. Ramratan Janokar, Mayor of Nagpur City and the Chairman of the Reception Committee proposed a welcome address to the distinguished guests and Delegates.

Since Mr. M.C. Joseph, President of IRA was keeping indifferent health, he could not go over to Nagpur to preside over the Convention. In his absence, Dr. A.T. Kovoor, President of Sri Lanka Rationalist Association presided over the Inaugural Session. Mr. M.C. Joseph's Special Message was however read out by Dr. Jadhav, Treasurer of NRA. Dr. Kovoor in his Presidential Address said that he was immensely pleased to preside over the IX Convention being organized by IRA. He narrated his association with IRA for the past several years especially in connection with the series of Divine Miracle Exposure Campaigns conducted by IRA with the

active co operation of Sri Lanka Rationalist Association. He further assured the Indian Rationalists that he would be glad to extend his help to the future projects that will be taken up in India by IRA. Mr. A. Suryanarayana, General Secretary, of IRA then Read Out his Report on the Rationalist Movement. Dr. C.G. Pande, President of NRA proposed the vote of thanks.

The Delegates thereafter dispersed for the Community Lunch arranged at Purnachandra Buty Students Union Hall which was largely attended. In the afternoon the Delegates met for the First Business Session 'Mobilization of Rationalist Forces'. Mr. C.A. Seshadri, Executive Vice President of IRA and Editor of FREETHOUGHT initiated the discussion. Mr. M. Prabha, Former President of Kerala Rationalist Association and Former Vice President of IRA Presided over the session, which was attended by Dr. W.S. Barlinge, Bar-at-law as the Chief Guest. Mr. Prabha in his Presidential Speech invited rationalists working in India under different banners to come together and work for the movement, keeping aside their minor difference. The speech was followed by discussions on the subject.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the DMEC Programme scheduled for 18th evening had to be postponed to 19th morning. Dr. A.T. Kovoor, Professor Hypno,

Mr. K.P. Swaminathan, the main participants of the Campaign, delighted the crowd with their speech, hypnotism and magic.

On 19th afternoon the delegates assembled for the Second Business Session, the subject for discussion being 'Plan of Action for 1977-78'. There was a lively discussion of the subject with many delegates participating in the discussions. Prof. Surendra K.S. Ajnat, General Secretary of the Punjab Rationalist Association initiated the discussion. Mr. U. Kalanatha, Secretary of Kerala Rationalist Association, Mr. Edamaraku, Former Secretary of KRA, Mr. G. Viswanathan, Executive Vice President of BRA and others made many concrete suggestions to be incorporated in the Plan of Action for the next two years. Mrs. Prabha Muthal, President of Chandrapur Rationalist Association was the Chief Guest at the Session, which was presided over by Mr. S. Ghosh, Delhi, a former President of IRA.

Immediately after the conclusion of the above Session, the Delegates continued the last Session to constitute the Advisory Board and pass Resolutions. After a long debate a number of Resolutions were unanimously passed. Before the Convention concluded the All India Advisory Board to guide the affairs of the Rationalist Movement was also duly constituted. With a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. S.S. Kochhar, Secretary of NRA the two day Convention came to a close.

On 19th evening, NRA also arranged a public meeting which was attended by a large crowd. Mr. S. Ghosh, former President of IRA presided over the meeting. Dr. A.T. Kovoov, Mr. G. Viswanathan, Prof. Surendra K.S. Ajnat, Mrs. P. Muthal and others spoke at the meeting.

GUJARAT RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

He came, saw and conquered, can be said of Dr. Abraham T. Kovoov's Gujarat tour. Due to the impact of his last tour, Rationalists of Gujarat accepted the challenge and Gujarat Rationalist Association was formed and the programme at Baroda and Ahmedabad were organised under its auspices.

Though the Programme was held in Baroda at 4.00 P. M. on a working day, the elite of the town, the Mayor Shri Ramanlal Patel, the D.S.P. Shri P. K. Dutt, the Asst. Collector A.P. Sinha, Pandit Anand Priyagee founder of 11 High Schools and Colleges, top medical consultants, professors, social workers etc. sat throughout the programme, listening to Kovoov's speech approvingly. It was a treat to hear Dr. Kovoov exposing the fraud of the Godmen to Gujarat elite, as some of them also believe in one Godman or other. The hall was fully packed.

On 15th Dec. he fulfilled his programme at Ahmedabad under the presidentship of Mr. Kamala Shankar Pande, 73, before a packed audience of over 1200 at Jaishankar (Sundari) Air conditioned theatre. At the end of his speech Dr. Kovoov produced abundant 'Holy Ash' by rubbing his two palms to the astonishment of the audience.

Besides Shri Kamalashankar Pandya, President of Gujarat Rationalist Association and the veteran Rationalist and freedom fighter, other eminent Rationalists and freedom fighters like Ramanlal Sheth (DAHOD), Sanal O Mehta (Baroda), Dr. Girish B. Patel MB (F.R.C.S.) Lon., Shri Ashok Padia, a prominent lawyer, all Vice-Presidents of Gujarat Rationalist Association, Prof. Yasin Dalal (Rajkot), Shri KK Makwana (Jawaharnagar) and Shri C. K. Balan (Ahmedabad) all Secretaries of Gujarat Rationalist Association, leading veteran lawyer of Baroda Shri Chandralal G. Parikh, Mrs. Nalini V. Mahan-

dale, leader of Baroda Women's Organization, Shri Jeewanlal G. Shah, Supreme Court counsel from Ahmedabad, Shri V. S. Kurup, INTUC leader, Shri Jagannath Pillai, Shri M.B. Yadav and Shri V.S. Rao Naidu of Jawaharnagar and others worked for the success of the programmes.

The Gujarat Rationalist Association proposes to start a quarterly in Gujarati language to consolidate the Rationalist movement in Gujarat and it has the solid support of writers and thinkers like prof. Yasin Dalal, Shri. Dinker Mehta, Shri. Chandubhai Patel, Shri. Chandulal G. Parikh, Shri. Girish B. Patel and others.

Apart from Ahmedabad and Baroda, new centres like Surat and Rajkot are anxious to arrange Divine Miracle Exposure Programme at their respective centres.

It can be said that superstitious and backward Gujarat has received the necessary shock treatment and it will truly have a healthy effect on the public life of the State.

KERALA YUKTHIVADI SANGHAM

The Palghat District Committee of Kerala Rationalist Association convened its Annual General Body Meeting at Vasavi Kalyanamandapam on 19-12-76. President Mr. V.P. Purushothaman presided. Report and accounts were presented by M.E. Thankappan (Secretary) and V.P. Lazar (Treasurer), respectively.

The following Office Bearers have been elected for the District Committee :

President

Prof. I. Richard, M.Sc.,

Vice-Presidents

1. M.S. Nair.
2. K. Achuthan.

Secretary

M.C. Balan, M.Com.,

Joint-Secretaries

1. A K Chandrankutty,
2. K. Pazhaniyandy.

Treasurer

K M. Bhavadas.

21 members were elected to the District Committee. Messrs M.E. Thankappan and K. M. Bhavadas were elected to represent District Association in the State Committee.

ATHEISTS' CONVENTION

An Atheists' Convention was organized at Nidamaru, near Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh) on 12th, 13th and 14th January 1977. Mr. P. K. Narayanan, Vice-President and Life Member of Indian Rationalist Association, Dr. G. N. Jyoti Shankar, Patron Member and former Vice-President of I.R.A. Prof. Surendra, K. S. Ajnat, General Secretary of Punjab Rationalist Association Mr. Dinesh Netta, Managing Committee Member of IRA, Mr. Jayagopal, Secretary of ASI, Prof. T. Venugopala Rao, President of ASI, G Samaram and others participated at the Convention which was organized by ASI, Visakhapatnam.

BAPATLA RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

The following have been elected as the Office Bearers of the Association.

President : Mr. A V. Punnaiah.

Vice-President : Mr. J. Anjayancyulu
Mr. Joshi Babu

Secretary : Mr. S. Ramakoteswara Rao

Treasurer : Mr. V.A. Kishore.

NEW MEMBERS

We heartily welcome the following NEW MEMBERS to I.R.A.

Membership No.	Name	Place
Life Members :		
LM—29	Mr. B. Premanand	Podanur (Tamilnadu)
LM—30	Mr. B. Dayanand	Podanur (Tamilnadu)
Ordinary Members :		
M—339	Mr. B. S. Dixit	Madras (Tamilnadu)
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